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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Hungary

SUBJECT Food Shortages in Rural Areas

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REFERENCES

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1. Unequal distribution, which favored industrial cities, caused food shortages during recent months in rural areas. Shortages occurred in bread and wheat flour, potatoes, dairy products, meats, animal fats, vegetable oils and bacon. Farm laborers, who had stood through half the night in line for food, were often unable to go to work in the fields the following morning.
2. In some places travelers were stopped on the roads by police and were forced to assist in the harvesting before being allowed to go on.¹ Priority was established on the harvesting of wheat, rye and corn. An extraordinarily good pea crop was allowed to rot while priority crops were being harvested.
3. Although shortages were severe, prices of available commodities were higher only on the black market. In cities and at controlled bakeries bread was sold at regular prices or there was none to be had.²

Comments:

1. A Budapest resident who travels frequently on the outskirts of the city was stopped by the police near Budapest in late July 1953 and, along with other travelers was put to work in the fields.
2. One man alleged that, during June 1953, he was awakened at 2:00 a.m. in a village near Szarvas, Bekes County, by the noise caused by a queue forming before a bakery. The baker opened his shop at 6:00 a.m. but had only 100 - 110 loaves for the 150 people waiting. Those who left without bread vehemently expressed their disgruntlement with the Government for expecting workers to produce without giving them food.

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